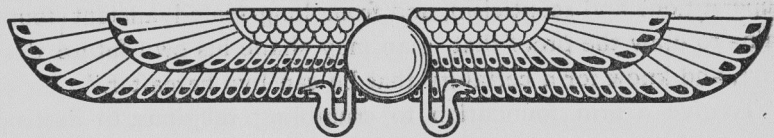


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +
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caps & l.c.

— THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

2 — Annie Besant

— Our revered teacher, H. P. Blavatsky, laid down very clearly and firmly the lines along which the Theosophical Society was intended to work by Those who use it as one of Their channels of spiritual help to man. The Master known under the initials K. H. wrote: "You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. * * This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans. * * You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science; and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. * * Its (the Society's) chief aim is to extirpate current

superstitions and scepticism, and from long-seated ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter."

To give a firm foundation to crumbling religions, to destroy superstition on one side and unbelief on the other, such was the duty laid on the Theosophical Society by Those who sent H. P. Blavatsky as Their messenger to the modern world. Its proclamation of Brotherhood was based upon the fact that all men share in one spiritual nature and shall finally reach one spiritual goal; and its appeal to men of all faiths to unite on one platform of mutual respect and tolerance was substantiated by the proofs that all religions sprang from a common source. This idea that the evils of the world sprang from ignorance, whether that ignorance took the form of superstition or of unbelief, gave to the methods of the Society the distinguishing mark that they aimed at extirpating ignorance rather than at destroying one by one, as they appeared, the innumerable evils which grow on the surface of modern society. Instead of chopping off the heads of weeds, leaving the roots to send up perpetually new offshoots, Theosophy extirpates the roots themselves and thus prevents the growth of a new crop. Leaving to others who do not share in their knowledge of causes the perennial warfare against effects, the Theosophical worker concerns himself chiefly with eradicating the causes themselves. He teaches that all evil actions arise from evil thinkings, that each life is linked by an inviolable law to the lives that precede and that follow it, that by understanding the principles underlying all phenomena character may be builded, destiny may be controlled, while present troubles, traced to their sources, may be faced with intelligence and fortitude, and may be used to subserve the purposes of the Soul. / *end* □

This method differentiates the Theosophical worker from those who are devoted solely to the relief of the physical woes of man; both are actuated by a recognition of human brotherhood and are fellow-workers for humanity, and both are needed as helpers of humanity at the present time. Philanthropy, as it feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, shelters the homeless, is doing useful and noble work in meeting the effects of past causes; Theosophy, as it enlightens the mind of the thoughtful by unveiling to them the

hidden causes of sorrow, as it preaches to all the simple and sublime doctrines of brotherhood, rebirth and causation, is doing the harder and more thankless work of removing the causes of hunger and distress, thus stopping the spring whence rushes the stream of evils that afflict society.

Individual Theosophists, however, who have not yet sufficiently mastered the principles of their profound philosophy to help others to understand them—though all must surely know more than those who have not studied at all—may well take part in schemes of active physical beneficence, and none is exempt from the duty of personal charity and ready response to every appeal for aid he is able to give: “He who does not practise altruism, he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and dares not undertake his defense as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist.” Every individual Theosophist should be a “brother,” giving brotherly help to all who come in his way according to his abilities, physical, astral, mental, spiritual. But the work of the Theosophical Society, as a Society, is not the feeding of bodies but the feeding of souls with the bread of wisdom; it must carry the light of truth and knowledge which clears away the darkness of ignorance; must it, like the Apostles of Christ, refuse to leave the teaching of the Word of God in order to serve tables.

The method of the Theosophical worker is differentiated from that of the exoteric religionist by his power to justify to the intellect that which is taught by religions on authority. He shows the scientific basis on which all moral precepts are founded, and thus supplies the “categorical imperative” which answers the question: “Why should I do this when the promptings of my nature lead me to do the opposite?” He explains the constitution of man in both his higher and his lower natures, and gives the exact knowledge which enables man to purify the lower and develop the higher. Instead of merely repeating moral maxims, “Be good, do good,” he shows the steps by which each man may

become good with certainty, and may do good with precision. Knowing that the masses of mankind will for many a millennium yet to come obey the authority to which their intuition responds, he teaches them authoritatively the doctrines of brotherhood, rebirth, and causation, easy to be understood; but he also brings philosophy and science to the aid of religion among the thoughtful and the educated, who are slipping into scepticism because their intellects are left unsatisfied. He knows that men may gain first-hand knowledge of the invisible worlds, and that the teachings of sages and seers may be verified to-day as much as of old; that the life of the spiritual man may be as full of wisdom and of power now as when the Buddha trod the plains of India, or as when the Christ walked beside the Sea of Galilee. By thus placing within men's reach the verification of spiritual facts, the proofs of spiritual forces, the experimental nature of the spiritual life, he does the work given to the Theosophical Society in charge, and shows it everywhere to be the friend of religion, the foe of materialism. Therefore Theosophists must be students, and must equip themselves for their glorious work by mastering the principles expounded in their philosophy, and by learning to apply them to the circumstances of individual, family, social and national life. Every exoteric religion sends out young men by the hundred who can repeat more or less eloquently the common-places of morality, and who do a useful work among the ignorant by reiterating these impressively and enforcing them on such minds with such promises and threats as their religions sanction; the Theosophical Society must train in its Branches, and send out into the world, teachers well grounded in the Divine Wisdom. The teachings which of old were given to the world by Kapila and Shankarâchârya, by Pythagoras and Plato, by Valentinus and Plotinus, by Bruno and Paracelsus, by Bœhme and H. P. Blavatsky, must not be represented to the world in the last years of the nineteenth century by intellectual incompetency and irresponsible chatter. Something more is demanded of us if we venture to stand before the world as exponents of Theosophy.

H. P. Blavatsky herself shows us an example we may well try to follow. She gave herself wholly, without reserve, to the work of acquiring and spreading the knowledge of spiritual truths. She

taught with indefatigable energy with pen and tongue; she reared the splendid monument of *The Secret Doctrine* as her best gift to the world; she opposed with all her strength the materialism of science and strove to revivify the ancient religions in the East. She would give her last shilling to a starving beggar if he came in her way, but took no part in organizing philanthropic work; and while she would encourage anyone who came to her to carry out any charitable plan he had at heart, she steadily drew her pupils who showed any aptitude for acquiring knowledge to devote themselves with simple-minded energy to the study and teaching of Theosophy. She knew that the future depended on the success of this teaching, on the permeation of the modern mind with Theosophy, and she led them to give themselves wholly to this one work.

Those who can read the signs of the times will understand the vital importance to the future of Theosophy of the direction now given to the work of the Theosophical Society. We are treading a cycle similar to that trodden by Christianity in its early centuries, and thousands of the souls that then engaged in conflict are reborn at the present time. There was then a struggle between the educated and the ignorant; the comparatively few who possessed the Gnosis and strove to preserve it in Christianity were overwhelmed by the ill-regulated enthusiasm and fanaticism of the ignorant masses. The Eastern teachings were then thrown into Christian forms, and the learned Gnostics within Christianity, and the learned Neo-Platonists outside it, both endeavored to keep alive the Ancient Wisdom and to hand it on, so that it might pass through the flood of social revolution and barbarian invasion, and succeed in moulding the new Western civilization which was to follow. The wild fanaticism of the Egyptian monks played on the unthinking masses of the ignorant populace; ignorance was regarded as a sign of religion, knowledge was jeered at, decried, trampled underfoot, learning and education were considered as carnal, while wild emotion was extolled as a sign of spiritual enlightenment. Nothing could be more agreeable to the unlearned and the idle than to regard their own disadvantages and vices as a mark of heavenly greatness, and to look upon the learning and dignified culture which they could not rival as signs

of unilluminated intellect and mere wisdom of this world. Every ignorant lad could set himself up as a teacher when mere emotional platitudes passed as inspiration, and the repetition of moral axioms passed as teaching. Volleys of abuse served for arguments, and insults served for reasons. The better types of Christians were attracted by professions of brotherly love and charity and forgiveness of wrong-doers; the poor were allured by alms and by showy rites and ceremonies. Long the battle raged, and at length victory declared itself on the side of ignorance and numbers; Christianity passed into its Dark Ages, and the treasures of the Gnosis disappeared.

Now the time has come in the slow revolution of the centuries when the renewed effort of the great White Lodge to spread the Ancient Wisdom through all religious bodies is showing itself as Theosophy, and many of its old instruments are again being used for its promulgation. Thus far the work has prospered, despite the desperate efforts made to break it up, and the thoughtful classes that guide the intellectual progress of the world are being more largely and definitely influenced than has ever before been the case. Threats of social revolution loom darkly in the near future, and again the question arises whether the guardians of the Gnosis in the lower world are strong enough, numerous enough, to protect the treasure, and hand it across the swirl of popular convulsions to mould the civilization which will spring from the ruins of the present. The same forces are rising against the spread of the Divine Wisdom among those called "Theosophists" as triumphed over it before among those called "Christians"—the glorification of ignorance, the appeals to passion, the exaltation of fanaticism as devotion, and of credulity as faith. Education is jeered at and attempts to reach the thoughtful and the cultured are decried. Appeals are also made to the nobler emotions of human love and brotherliness, and "practical" philanthropy is exalted at the expense of wisdom. Rigid virtue and uprightness are considered as less valuable than blind enthusiasm, and calm judgment and balance are thought "unspiritual."

Are the members of the Theosophical Society strong enough to withstand the torrent, clear sighted enough to discern the right, firm enough to remain unshaken, and thus make the Society the

ark in which the treasure of the Ancient Wisdom shall be preserved and carried over to the world beyond the flood? I know not. But we do know that every effort is needed and that no effort is wasted; that we stand beside many an ancient comrade and are assailed by many an ancient antagonist; that on the results of the present struggle hangs the destiny of the next civilization. "Happy the warriors, O Pârtha, who obtain such a fight, spontaneously offered as an open door to Svarga. * * Therefore stand up, O son of Kunti, resolute to fight."

ANNIE BESANT.

1897.

Is It the Concluding Year of the Old Cycle?

This question has so often been asked, that its appearance in the *Forum* was quite timely. But the answer to it would have been somewhat easier, had it been a little more explicit as to what is meant by "old cycle." Every year is always in itself the end of some—and often of many—old cycles. But if the expression "Old Cycle" is here intended to signify the close of the world's past existence and of man's present conditions and civilization, for the ushering in of a "New Era," then the answer can unhesitatingly be made by a NO; or if the question refers merely to the conclusion of a fractionary period of the Hindu Kali Yuga, then again *No* must be the answer. Whatever the near future may or may not have in reserve for us, and whether or not it may be accompanied by natural convulsions and human changes, revolutions, wars and epidemics, there are no indications of any general "climacteric" *i. e.*, S. D. I, 656, absolutely critical period approaching; and, therefore, we must decidedly not look forward to any "millenium" or "end of times," nor even for any new Saviour. (Secret Doctrine, I, 470, old edition.)

Yet there is no denying that for years past there has certainly been among all nations, a general feeling of uneasiness, a kind of intuition that the end of this century would be marked by some unexpected events, by some mysterious and therefore dreadful visitations due to the winding up of some "old cycles."

This is particularly true of India, and from thence has been derived the prominence especially given to this idea among Theosophists, whose attention was first awakened by statements in our literature (S. D., I., 612, O. E.) that, from November, 1897, to March 1898, we were to pass through the close of the first minor cycle of five thousand years of the Black Age, or Hindu Kali Yuga, which began on the 18th of February, 3102 B. C. (S. D., I., 661-665; II., 435), and which is consequently to last 427,000 years more; the world before reaching the end of that period, having thus to pass through 85.4 more minor cycles, similar to the one now nearing its close. Now the absolute end of the Kali Yuga, according to all Hindu theories, is to be accompanied by tremendous disasters, and it is not impossible that the modern Hindu writers have mixed up, in their present expectations of dire visitations, the end of the whole cycle, with the end of the first portion of 5,000 years. Nevertheless, it is very patent that India is looking forward with awe to the next few years, until the new cycle of 5,000 years has begun. But 1897 is not the concluding year of that "old cycle." Since Kali Yuga started at the death of Krishna, on the 18th of February (or some say on the 12th of April) 3102 B. C., it needs the addition of 1898 years since Christ to make 5,000; but the completion of those will not take place before the 18th of February, 1899, because 5,000 belongs to the old cycle and must be ended, *i. e.*, in 1899, before the new cycle starts. However, as the wheels of nature never turn abruptly, and twilights or "sandhyas" always take place between cycles, so the effects, astronomical and otherwise of the passage from this first fractionary cycle to its follower, are also expected to extend over several intervening years, viz., from 1897 to 1901 or 1902. The excitement of the Hindus over the matter is increased by the assertions of their astrologers, announcing a singular situation of various planets in one and the same sign, which is supposed to inevitably cause great calamities, inundations, extreme famine and pestilence, those three visitations now oppressing India only foreboding worse ones to follow up to 1899. The Hindu *Jyotisha Shastra* says: "The combination of 5 planets in one single sign of the Zodiac in the same month, produces the destruction of all towns, that of 6 planets in the same sign, produces

the destruction of all kingdoms, while the grouping of 7 planets announces the destruction of various worlds, and that of 8 prognosticates the end of the entire Universe." Now, we have a strange coincidence in this that, while it is a known fact that the planets are generally dispersed through the signs of the Zodiac, rarely two meeting in the same sign, and very exceptionally 3 or 4, on the contrary, 5, 6 and 7 will actually meet very closely in the next four or five years, as can be seen by the following table :

POSITION OF PLANETS.

YEAR.	NOVEMBER.	☿	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	NEW MOONS	NUMBER OF PLANETS IN	
														Scorpio	Sagit.
1897	{ 14 to 17	♊	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	{ 24th } ♊	5	1
	{ 24-25	"	"	"	"	♋	"	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	{ } ♊	2	5
1898	{ 14-15	"	♋	"	"	♌	♍	"	♎	"	♏	"	{ 14th } ♊	1	5
	{ 22 to 30	"	"	"	"	♌	"	"	♎	"	♏	♐	{ } ♊	1	5
1899	{ 3-4	"	"	"	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	"	{ 3d } ♊	6	2
	{ 22 to 30	"	"	"	"	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	"	{ } ♊	2	6 *

*According to Hindu Astrologers, "8 planets will meet in *Vrich-chhika* (Scorpio) at the 23d Ghatika (2-06 A. M.) of the 13th lunar day (*trayodasi*) or black half of the month *Krittika* (last week of November) of the year *Vikari* of the cycle *Brihaspati*, A. D. 1899. Between that time and the succeeding new moon, two days later, a great ruin will come over all India." The difference between the Hindu Scorpio and our Sagittarius may be caused by a different computation of the Precessions, and by the various sizes they give to their constellations.

To the above we must add that the Hindu count as invisible planets the *nodes*. We shall therefore see that in November 1897, 1898 and 1899, there will be groupings of at least 5 and 6, or counting in the nodes (Rahu), 6 and 7 planets in very close quarters of Scorpio and Sagittarius; and a similar conjunction is said to have marked the start of the Kali Yuga. "Bhisma, the greatest and most just warrior of the world, died during the Mahabharata War, in the month of Margasira (December) on the new moon's day (Amavarya) when 7 planets met in the same sign, and had it not been for that he would not have died then." (J. Shastra.) I have not the elements at hand to figure out for 1900 and 1901, but some time back it was announced that, on December 30th 1901, there is to be another singular conjunction of 6

planets in one line, in the same sign Capricornus, with the seventh Neptune, opposite on the same line prolonged into the corresponding sign Cancer, which if true, ought, according to Berossus and other old astrologers, to prognosticate a very extended, if not universal flood. The anxiety of the Hindus, based on their sacred predictions, can therefore be understood.

For Theosophists the matter was, perhaps, unduly magnified by a prediction published in *Theosophist* (Vol. V. 50) and reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*, in which the end of this 5,000-year cycle appeared connected with impending disasters: "Cataclysm is to follow cataclysm, men will be swallowed up by thousands, new lands will appear and old ones subside and secrets of old will be freshly revealed," etc. However plausibly this last sentence would apply to the present times and without ignoring the occult importance of the figure 5, it does seem rather improbable that any such startling and radical results—which prevail only in *climacteric*, *i. e.*, decisive periods of primary and racial cycles—should accompany the close of this small, unimportant and fractionary period, although it might well be, as H. P. B. said, "the dawn of a new cycle, *at the end of which* (new cycle) not a few of the accounts will be settled and squared between the various races" (S. D., I, xlv); this dawn of a new cycle would be more in harmony with what she says also of the transformation now occurring in America, as preparation for the next sub-race (S. D., II, 444)

But the whole truth of the matter at present seems to be that, in the few following years—but not in 1897—terminate, not one particular cycle alone, but several varied and interesting ones, or they so closely overlap, that indeed it becomes difficult to foresee what their combined influences may bring about. Thus, in the Kali Yugic fraction is hidden the end of another and more serious period, that of five months (10,775 or 10,800 years), of that Great Precessional Zodiacal or Orphic Year, "*which regulates the destiny of nations*" (S. D., II, 330–331, 435), although its influence is also modified by that other interesting cycle, the revolution of the Apsis (S. D., note 330, Isis Unveiled, I, 33; II, 366.)

In other words, the Precession of Equinoxes has carried us through 5 signs of the Zodiac since the beginning of the present

Zodiacal Year, when occurred—if we believe the *Secret Doctrine*—the last esoterically recorded deluge, which swamped the last remnant of Atlantis (Poseidon) and of the Fourth Race, and which H. P. B. puts roughly, about 11,000 years ago (S. D., II, 433, note), when the Sun passed from Leo into Cancer, the watery sign, which the Egyptians represented by the hieroglyph of the beetle, Scarabæus, as emblem of the resurrection of the Orphic Year. Many other times in past occult history, Cancer had been connected with radical changes; and now, keeping in mind the evident influence of “watery signs,” and considering that the sign we have been under for the past zodiacal month is also a watery one, though the mildest, Pisces, it would not be surprising if something did take place at the time when the Sun leaves it, to pass into the next, Aquarius, the mysterious water-measurer or overcomer. There is, however, some considerable discrepancy among scientists as to the exact time when that change is to happen, some arguing that it already took place some 10, 50, or even 144 years ago, while others contend that it will not happen until 2181 A. D. But the astrologers who seem to know best, put it between now and 1900. One thing which would seem to justify the Astrologers, and at the same time connect this period of five precessional months with the above-mentioned 5,000 year fraction of the Hindu Kali Yuga, is that this last cycle contains just 40 such months. Moreover, outside of the above theosophical cycles, and amongst various other purely astronomical ones, whose culmination is also impending, we must specially notice the one of 33 years (mentioned in S. D., I, 673) at which time the Earth passes through the heart of the most extensive swarm of meteorites from which result those well-known wonderful showers of stars, noticed in 1833 and in 1866. The climax is now expected for February, August and November, 1899 and 1900, and all the writers—occult or religious—who believe that there are times when “falls upon men a great hail out of heavens every stone about the weight of a talent” (Rev. xvi, 21), similar to that shower which helped Joshua’s victory, all such writers are greatly exercised over the coming passage, which astronomical calculations have indicated as liable to produce a “much greater and heavier shower than ever before”

and therefore promising some exceedingly threatening times for poor humanity. This anticipation has even caused several American writers, Capt. Kelso-Carter, Lieut. Totten, Dr. B. O. Kinnear, etc., to predict for the spring or autumn of 1899, and quite independently of all theosophical and Indian theories, a ghastly climax, possibly a final Advent, preceded by a "reign of horrors," wars, pestilence and cataclysms, producing the fulfilment of certain Biblical prophecies, the text of which has been further sustained by the London Chronologist Dimblebey, on revised dates and corrected chronologies of the Bible.

Aside again from these perhaps fanciful or fanatic interpretations of long-tormented Biblical texts, some specialists in scientific studies, like Falb (the Viennese prophet and authority on earthquakes) Perey and Milne of the Isle of Wight, now at the University of Tokio, agree with astrological students to the fact that a period of intense activity of seismic and volcanic forces may soon be expected; so that, as H. P. B. said, the incessant earthquakes of late years "may be a warning" (S. D., II, 776, note). Europe seems to be particularly threatened for the next few years, justifying H. P. B.'s covered predictions (S. D., I, 641 to 647), especially in what she said of the *Karmic* cataclysms of *England, France and Europe* generally (I, 646); and a member of the new London Astrological Society, Mr. Minchin, at the last meeting of that Association, did not hesitate to make a most direful prediction regarding the end of 1898 and the beginning of 1899, "advising all who could get out of Europe before December, 1898, to do so, as there was terrible danger." (Modern Astrology, March, 1897, p. 386.) This naturally leads us to remember the old Dr. J. Buchanan, the father of Psychometry, who published in the *Arena* (1890, p. 292, 312) an article critically reviewed in *Theosophist* (XII, December, 1890), announcing through psychic foresight a long series of gradually increasing social disturbances, revolutions and geological cataclysms growing particularly severe for America, about the beginning of 1900 and culminating in intensity about 1916, when America at last will breathe out of a terrible civil war and of appalling meteorological and seismic disturbances. All these independent testimonies to pessimistic expectations, may help to suppose that

there may at present be many hidden cycles combining to produce a threatening, ominous and trying epoch for humanity. Whatever may happen, it must, however, be positively understood that it is not yet the "end of the world;" but according to Masters, and unless strenuous efforts (such as have caused the foundation of the Theosophical movement) do not succeed in producing the necessary enlightenment, the present humanity is bound "to grow morally and spiritually from bad to worse, for many years yet, down to the lowest point of the black cycle of evolution, while growing at the same time better intellectually and physically, thus accounting for some of the apparent contradictions of our times."

Then will dawn the period announced by H. P. B.'s Masters, when our Fifth Races will reach a climax similar to that which befell the sinful Atlanteans. Now, this view rather agrees with astrological prognostics; and if humanity is really influenced, as history shows, by the nature of the Zodiacal Signs, through which the Sun happens to radiate for the time his vivifying currents—the same sign bringing forth similar events and affecting humanity in a similar manner (see Transactions of the Scottish Lodge, X, 1894), just as the "features of any individual life are always in accordance with the Constellation one is born under" (S. D., I, 639), then the prospects are certainly very poor for our descendants and for ourselves when the wheel of re-incarnation brings us back. In effect, Aquarius, the present forthcoming ruler, the especial overshadower of old Atlantis, represented as a positive, cruel, airy sign, tainted by the nefarious influences of Saturn, and in which the world will be ruled, no longer through the seas, but through the air, Aquarius will lead us to expect that Black Magic will predominate through exaltation of feminine influence. What reformer will he bring to succeed the Jesus of the waning Pisces, future will tell!

In the next period of 2155 years Capricornus, earthly, negative and weak, though very mystical (S. D. I, 219, 223) but also ruled by cruel Saturn and excited by Mars, will produce a very trying antagonism between spirituality and materiality, intellectuality and sorcery, thus exaggerating the contrast to those causes which produced the last cataclysm in the opposite sign, Cancer; and

these materialistic tendencies will be followed by the aggravations of the fiery Sagittarius (4310 years hence), positive and cruel, whose arrows will make humanity smart, "plaguing them exceedingly with great plagues," and thereby increasing the wickedness which will justify the next advent of Scorpio (6465 years), the worst of all, also influenced by Mars, and bringing on the "rule of the devil," during which water can again be expected to acquire the uncomfortable predominance it had 25,868 years previously. After this will again come the equilibrium of Libra, and our races may be expected to have about ten thousand more years of relative, though decadent rest, before reaching in the spiral of time, the point corresponding to the initial departure, the renewal of the Precessional Year in Cancer, with all its concomitant phenomena (S. D., I, 649), making in all, from the present day, precisely that "reprieve of about 16,000 years," mentioned in the Secret Doctrine (II, 331).

In so far, however, as we are now concerned—whatever may or may not be the proximated results of the various cycles, mentioned and unmentioned, now ending—is a matter which should not worry us. The only thing we have to do, is to wait quietly and undisturbed, since Theosophy teaches, not only the law of cycles, but also the fact that no danger ever distresses the righteous, who remember that we are always as thoroughly protected as well as unavoidably punished by our own inflexible Karma; and also that all such Egos, as Dr. Anderson says in his *Karma* (p. 126), "who have no karmic connection with a portion of the globe where a cataclysm is coming," are always duly attended to, or mysteriously warned, so as to be timely put out of danger, while those who are karmically connected remain fatally and necessarily, as shown in all old Scriptures, deaf and blind to all warnings.

A. MARQUES.

OBITUARY.

It is with the deepest regret that I have to announce the death on April 1st of Mr. JOHN C. STAPLES, the General Secretary of the Australasian Section. Mr. STAPLES had been suffering from ill health for several months past, but his passing away comes as a complete surprise to all. ED. MERCURY.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCLX.

Is 1897 the Concluding Year of the Old Cycle?

M. A. W.—This question pertains to a very profound subject and cannot, therefore, be answered with a curt “yes or no;” on the contrary, the interest of the question lies in its suggestiveness, and in the vistas revealed by any effort to solve its problem.

It is a generally-accepted statement in the T. S., based on utterances of H. P. B., that the year 1897–98 closing the first 5,000 years of the Kali Yuga completes a great cycle; but it is more than probable that our teacher, in speaking of this cycle, intended to give a hint rather than to make a positive statement. Cycles are many; every motion of the earth and of the planets in regard to each other, to the Sun and to the Zodiac, describes a cycle which produces effects and changes as great, though not so well known to us, as the cycle of day and day, of waking and sleeping, darkness and light.

A study of history in the light of Astrology proves that the destiny of nations and peoples is written in the stars. “As above so below” is startlingly true of the influences of sun and planets working through the minds of men.

The year 1897 may or may not be a cyclic year, all is not yet known, but it is a certain fact that we are now on the threshold of a new cycle of 2,155 years (roughly stated), which cycle may be termed a sidereal month, for during that period the Sun appears in the same zodiacal sign at the vernal equinox. In this way he circles through the Zodiac in 25,868 years. Ever since the Christian Era the forces of the Sun have come to us colored, so to speak, with the qualities of that part of the Zodiac known as Pisces—the fishes—the symbol of disintegration, strife, pralaya, also of understanding, and of that deep love which is the essence of sacrifice and the spirit of martyrdom. Are not these qualities perceptible in the history of that period?

But now the Sun passes into Aquarius—the magician, the water-carrier—symbolizing diffused knowledge, memory, soul. Already, we feel its influence in the activity of the human mind, in the wonderful scientific advance, in humanitarian effort and spiritual awakening. But there are other cycles of lesser duration to be considered. According to the Kabala, our planet has been, since 1873, under the special influence of Mercury—the thinker, the speaker—favorable to science to the questions of labor and capital, to brotherhood, sanitary reforms, travel, etc. This Kabalistic cycle lasts 36 years so that the influence of Mercury will continue until 1908, when Mars—the warrior—will assume sway. These cycles of 36 years are again divided into sub-cycles of a year each. The present year being under Jupiter, the conservative force, but next year bringing Mars.

Mr. Walter Old (Sephariel) in the *Astrologer's Magazine*, November 1894, speaking of the 36-year cycle says: "Next comes Mars, whose rule commences in the year 1909. * * * If one would catch the spirit of that generation, let him but mark the doings of this planet Mars when last he held sway, from 1657 to 1692. Nor will the land be free from heavy afflictions in the matter of national plagues, and wide-spread epidemics, terrible fires and the like; as in the old days referred to."

Far less known even than these cycles are others, two of which are mentioned by Old in his "Notes on Planetary Cycles," and from his calculations of these periods we learn that the earth is about half-way through the period of disintegration the turning point of destiny. We quote again from Mr. Old: "Between the years 1802 and 2000 A. D., immense seismic movements and geological changes will occur. The laws ruling the tenure of land will undergo great changes, the world will be filled with greed for terrestrial possessions. * *

In the year 2000 A. D., a more humane and exalted period will set in upon the world. A study of these cyclic periods shows that this planet has entered upon a critical period of its evolution marked by disintegration of old forms to make way for others more fitting. But this period does not close this year nor next, more than half a century must pass ere the transition will be complete; and, again, 1,000 years before there comes "an end of

earth," *i. e.*, of the present condition of gross materiality. Such is the vista revealed by Astrology.

QUESTION CCCLXI.

The Australian aborigines are said to be the remnants of the Lemurian race: when and where did this race exist, and what were its chief characteristics?

W. A. M.—Hæchel in his "Pedigree of Man" says "Lemuria is an ancient continent now sunk beneath the waters of the Indian Ocean, which, lying to the South of the Asia of to-day, stretched on the one hand eastwards to upper India and Sunda Island, on the other westward, as far as Madagascar and Africa." This eminent writer has given in this work an outline map of the submerged continent. The Secret Doctrine describes it as a vast continent extending almost from the Antarctic Circle to Scandinavia and far into the Pacific Ocean beyond Easter Island, Lat., 26° S. Long 110° W. It rounded South Africa (then a mere fragment in process of formation) and pitted up to what is now Norway. The Atlantic portion formed later on geological basis of the Atlantean Continent. It was destroyed, or at least its northern portion, 700,000 years before the Tertiary Period hence its civilizations must have flourished more than a million years ago. Subterranean fires caused the greater portion of this vast continent to sink beneath the waters. Lemuria was the home of the Third Race, which race marks one the turning points in the evolution of man, for in it self-conscious mind appears and the separation into sexes takes place. The S. D. says: "This race (third) could live with equal ease in water, air or fire, for it had an unlimited control over the elements. These were the "Sons of God;" not those who saw the daughters of men, but the real Elohim. It was they who imparted Nature's most weird secrets to men, and revealed to them the ineffable and now lost word."—S. D., Vol. II, page 220. In Vol. I, page 207, O. E., it says: "This Third Race is sometimes called collectively "The Sons of Passive Yoga." In the earlier portion of its existence, while still in its purity the "Sons of Wisdom," who incarnated in this Third Race produced by Kriyasakti, a

progeny called the "Sons of Ad," or of the "Fire-Mist, the Sons of Will and Yoga," who, it is explained, remained entirely apart from the rest of mankind. "It is at the mid-point of the Third Root Race that man was endowed with Manas—S. D. Vol, II, page 255. On page 272 we read; "No sooner had the mental eye of man been opened to understanding than the Third Race felt itself one with the ever present. * * One Universal Deity." The third eye belonged to this race, a fact glyphed in the myths of the one-eyed Cyclops. Again, the S. D. says: "Third Race fell, and created no longer; it begat its progeny—Vol. II, 267. And thus the Third Race progressed along the downward arc culminating in the Lemuro—Atlantean, giants and sorcerers, yet men like man of to-day.

QUESTIONS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT
ISSUES OF THE FORUM.

I. When a person dies prematurely by accident or in the case of a suicide, does the astral body continue to exist and grow in the atmosphere of the earth, until the Karmic hour of release has struck?

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

T. S. ECHOES.

LECTURE TOUR OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

Mrs. Besant's long and stormy journey of nearly five weeks from India to America was completed on Thursday, March 18th, when she arrived in New York and was welcomed by Mr. Fullerton, the General Secretary of the American Section of the Theosophical Society.

Even on the landing place, a quantity of reporters surrounded Mrs. Besant, and a paper, the New York *Tribune*, received on the way to the hotel, already contained a notice of her arrival. The whole afternoon was occupied with interviews and the papers next day contained accounts more or less inaccurate, but on the whole very friendly in character.

Time passed on Friday and Saturday in receiving people, writing articles and letters, and making arrangements for the lectures to be given in Chickering Hall on Sunday evening. Early on Sunday morning the

Countess Wachtmeister arrived from Buffalo and Toronto, where she had been lecturing daily and working with many people in the movement.

The Countess is still very exhausted after her arduous labors, which resulted in the formation of 13 Branches and one center for Study, and in the acquisition of many members. The Countess accompanies Mrs. Besant and thus the tour will be one of double activity.

Mrs. Besant's lecture in Chickering Hall on Sunday was a distinct success; the audience was attracted and interested, and the lantern slides showed up well, so prospects are good for the next two Sundays.

On Monday evening, after a busy day, again spent in seeing enquirers, in correspondence, and in arranging the details of the proposed six months' tour through the States, a reception was held in the large room of the Jefferson Hotel, and for an hour and a half a crowd of attentive listeners and questioners proved that Americans are ready to hear and appreciate deep truths clearly expressed.

The next two weeks are full of appointments, and Mrs. Besant is well launched on her American work, with every indication that the result will be a great revival of public interest in the Theosophical movement, and that groups of earnest students are waiting to be formed into Lodges of the Society.

On Monday, April 5th, we start for St. Louis and will go on to Kansas, Topeka, Denver, Colorado, Leadville, Salt Lake City and Ogden on the way to Los Angeles, where we expect to arrive about April 29th.

April 6th.—The past ten days have been remarkable for the quantity and variety of work compressed into them. On the evening of the 26th, Mrs. Besant spoke at Brooklyn, in the hall of the Y. M. C. A., on "Suffering and Evil, their Causes and their cure." The audience was a very sympathetic one, and a number of those who were deeply interested were received by Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister the next evening in the parlor of the same fine building, where a Branch was formed. The good result of the lectures in New York, Brooklyn and Newark was apparent when, on Sunday morning, March 28th, a number of earnest people met in the Jefferson Hotel and formed a new Lodge of the American section of the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant then addressed the members of the Brooklyn and New York Lodges, and remarked that to successfully perform their duty as centers of Theosophic study and points of contact with the outer world, must extend to each individual member a perfect freedom of thought; the one bond of union being the belief in Brotherhood. Chickering Hall, on the evening of the same day, again contained an attentive audience, the subject of the lecture was: "Materialism Undermined by Science."

On Monday, Mrs. Besant and the Countess went to Washington, D. C., where they were received by members of the Society and were the guests of Mrs. Johnston, who gave a well-attended reception in her large and commodious rooms, about 200 being present. At the close of this ceremony Mrs. Besant was asked to speak, and delivered a short address on Theosophy. The next day the lecture hall was crowded, and all were interested in the pictures of Thought Forms, which were thrown upon the screen by the lime light. Mrs. Besant received each afternoon, and intelligent and searching questions were put to her.

The next day, when Mrs. Besant left for Philadelphia, the Countess formed the members into the Washington Lodge of the T. S., and on Saturday she addressed a meeting at the house of Mrs. Lockwood, who had invited a large number of friends. On Sunday, the Countess lectured to a crowded audience at the People's Church in the morning, and gave another lecture in the Society Temple in the evening.

In Philadelphia, the hospitable home of Dr. Emma Brooke had already welcomed one of the parties; a number of interested visitors gathered there in the afternoon to talk Theosophy with Mrs. Besant, and after she had given her lecture in the New Century Club before a full house, universal regret was expressed that she could not devote more than one day to this promising field for Theosophic work. Two meetings were held the following day, and a Lodge of earnest workers was formed here ere Mrs. Besant and Miss Willson left. It was touching to find old and personal friends of Madame Blavatsky coming forward to tell of the help that she had given them, and to express their pleasure that her work was being carried on.

The return to New York was on Saturday, April 3d, and the third meeting of the New York and Brooklyn Branches was held on Sunday morning; to assist the future studies of the members Mrs. Besant explained some of the workings of the three great life-waves of evolution and their action on the different planes. In the afternoon she spoke before a crowded assembly in the large hall of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society on the proofs of the existence of the Soul. The adverse remarks of some materialistic speakers at the conclusion of the address called forth an answer in Mrs. Besant's well-known style, in which she greatly cut the ground from under her critic's feet, and showed that the latest discoveries of science were strengthening the Theosophical position.

A lecture to a good audience in Chickering Hall concluded a very busy day the following afternoon the Countess joined us as we passed through Philadelphia on our way to St. Louis and the West. The lime light pictures of Thought Forms and of the Human Aura thrown on the screen

to illustrate the lectures upon this difficult subject, much impress the audieuces with the reality of the investigations, and are very useful.

April 14th.—In New York we had heard of floods along the valley of the Mississippi, and as we advanced towards St. Louis, which is built at the junction of the Missouri and the "Father of Waters," more and more flooded ground and traces of recent heavy rains could be observed from the railway. The papers had been full of the panic caused by the rising of the river, and from this and other causes we had received a telegram that no lecture would be given at St. Louis; we were sorry, for the sake of the people there, and the work that might have been started. We passed on to Kansas City, where two lectures were given by Mrs. Besant in the Academy of Music. Both were very badly attended and little interest in Theosophy was shown, although the papers, on the whole, gave good reports. Mrs. Besant and the Countess received each afternoon at the Midland Hotel, and when we left, a small group of people had been gathered who would meet and form a Lodge in order to study together.

At a little before 10 o'clock, on Monday morning, we left Kansas City and went on to Topeka, where we arrived soon after noon. We were told that we were the first members of the Society who had visited this pleasant little place, and the interest in Theosophy was shown by the numerous visitors who came to the National Hotel to see Mrs. Besant and the Countess. In the evening the Library Hall was half-filled with a superior audience to whom Mrs. Besant spoke on "Theosophy and its Teachings." The morning of the next day was spent in receiving the numerous enquirers, and, before we left, Topeka had a Lodge of the T. S., with twelve members, and showed promising signs of future active work and study.

We are now at La Junta waiting for the train to take us on to Denver.

April 25th.—On the evening of Mrs. Besant's arrival in the pure air of Denver City, the large reception room of the Hotel was quite filled with people, who flocked to welcome her and to express their interest in Theosophy.

Each afternoon, from 3 to 5 o'clock, when Mrs. Besant and the Countess received, the crowd of enquirers increased, until at last they overflowed into the hall. Three lectures were given in Denver, and were pretty well attended—especially the one on "the Aura" and "Thought Forms," with lime-light illustrations.

Here quite a strong Lodge of 32 members was formed, and one of them volunteered to obtain a room for use as a Theosophical Reading Room and center for enquiry. The formation of a Lodge much strengthens the work

of old members who have become isolated, and who have remained true to the parent Society, often in the face of much trouble and difficulty.

From Denver we went, on Monday morning, April 19th, to Colorado Springs. Here, in spite of the natural beauty of the place, all at first seemed cold in regard to Theosophy. But soon an old member or two called, and the first lecture on "Theosophy and its Teachings" produced the usual result—one after another, enquirers appeared, and on Wednesday morning a group of 11 people met and formed themselves into a Lodge.

Once more the train was "boarded," and we climbed across the Rocky Mountains, with all their grand and varied scenery, and after a night in the train, descended through the desert onto the well-watered, snow-mountain-encircled plain on which stands Salt Lake City.

From many causes this place seemed unlikely soil for Theosophic ideas to take root and the audiences were small, but once more we found enough people sufficiently interested to form a Lodge for study. This was also the case in Ogden, where, after two splendid lectures by Mrs. Besant, setting forth in plain language the nature of man and his high possibilities, a group of people were forming themselves into a Lodge of the Society when we left. Thus we leave behind an unbroken chain of Lodges in all the towns visited by Mrs. Besant and the Countess—if we, perhaps, except Newark, N. J., which, however, incorporated itself with the New York Lodge.

Official Notice.

5 UNIVERSITY PLACE, NEW YORK, April 12, 1897.

The Executive Committee American Section T. S. have unanimously resolved that the 11th Annual Convention shall be held in the city of Chicago, Ill. The amended Constitution provides that Convention shall meet on the 2d Sunday in June, which falls this year on the 13th, but as it is of the utmost importance that Mrs. Annie Besant be present at Convention, and as it is impossible for her to reach Chicago before the 4th Sunday, June 27th, the Committee's unanimous judgment is that the meeting should be postponed till the latter date, the approval of the Convention to the change being solicited. Convention will therefore assemble at the Chicago Headquarters, Room 426, 26 Van Buren St., on Sunday, June 27th, at 10 A. M. Further notice to Branch Secretaries and to members at large will be sent out in May.

From January 5th to April 19th, I remitted as contributions from the American Section the following: To Benarez, for the Famine Relief

Fund, \$168.50; to Adyar, for the Relief of Headquarters, \$63.22. Deep appreciation of this generous response to the appeal is felt.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, Gen'l Sec'y.

SEATTLE, WASH., April 9, 1897.—Amanda Lodge seems to be animated with the spirit of life, which we find all about us in the springtime. We truly feel that the winter is over and the time of the singing of the birds has come. The meetings are so well attended that we have decided to rent a much larger room and move into it on the 1st of May. The lecture course was quite a success, all of the papers being carefully prepared and showing much study and thought on the part of the members. Mr. Barnes has arranged another series of lectures for the next two months.

We held one parlor meeting last month which was not very well attended but we are not discouraged and shall keep on with the good work. One of our book-dealers has ordered a large supply of Mrs. Besant's books in anticipation of an increased demand during and after her visit here. We are sorry to lose the presence of one of our most faithful members, Mrs. Eleanor Kling, who has gone to Silver City, Idaho. Mrs. Kling has been for many years an earnest worker for Theosophy and we know she will arouse an interest in the cause wherever she goes. The lodge held a farewell reception for her, which was well attended, and a pleasant evening was spent. The members uniting in wishing her God-speed on her journey. Mrs. Kling still continues a member of the lodge, but we will miss her helpful, kindly spirit in our meetings.

HARRIET C. STEIN, Sec'y.

SPOKANE, WASH., April 10, 1897.—Our Olympus Lodge kept the standard of Theosophy floating during the month of March. We have added one new member, Mr. Francis Cousins, who has been a regular attendant at our lodge meetings since we started, and who has given us two valuable papers on Theosophical subjects. Mr. Cousins is a deep student of religious and philosophical subjects. We discussed some interesting subjects during March. On the 7th, the President lectured on "Re-incarnation and Science;" on the 14th, the Vice-President, Mr. Joseph Cullen, lectured on "The Effect of Phenomena on the Spiritual Growth of Man;" on the 21st, Mrs. Francis Cousins lectured on "The Relation of Theosophy to Politics," and on the 29th, Mr. Cullen again lectured on "The Reason Why We Are Insensible to the Astral plane." All these lectures were well attended, there being usually from thirty to forty people present. Mrs. L. Horn Thomas very kindly presented our Lodge Library with several Theosophical works, among them being "Chuang

Tzu, Mystic, Moralist and Social Reformer," which we prize very highly.
Our library is growing steadily. JNO. MACKENZIE, Pres.

CLEVELAND, O.—The recent visit of the Countess Wachtmeister to our city has given just the impetus needed to arouse interest in and promote the study of Theosophy. The happy result has been the formation of a "Cleveland Branch" of the Theosophical Society, consisting of twelve members, with Mrs. A. L. Cady, Pres., Mr. Wm. Rogers, Vice-Pres., and Mrs. Helen B. Olmstead, Sec'y and Treas.

BUFFALO, N. Y., April 18th.—The officers of the new Branch here (the Fidelity Lodge, T. S.) are as follows: President, Dr. T. P. C. Barnard, No. Tonawanda, N. Y.; Vice President, Mr. A. Goodman; Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. G. B. Hastings, 877 Elliot Square, Buffalo. Our public meetings have been well attended, and everything promises for a healthy growth in the Society. Fraternally, T. P. C. BARNARD.

TORONTO, CANADA, April 20th.—The Countess Wachtmeister reached Toronto on March 14th; delivered three lectures on the 16th, 17th and 18th, respectively; went to Hamilton, Ont., and lectured on the 19th and 20th, when she left for Buffalo, where she was to speak, prior to meeting Mrs. Besant in New York. Both at Toronto and Hamilton her visit has been productive of much good; in the latter city sufficient names were promised to form a Branch. The press of both cities published interviews with the Countess and report of her lectures. The *Canadian Home Journal* devoted nearly one whole page to an exceedingly well-written description of the Countess and her philosophy. The special programme for March 26th. included papers on the subjects "Whence we came," "Why we are here," and "Whither we are going," also a musical and literary entertainment, contributed by non-members and much appreciated by the audience. F. E. TITUS.

LOS ANGELES, April 21.—The Brahmacharin Bodhabhikshu is still carrying on the good work here and the interest in his lectures and classes continues unabated. Since February, when he began his lectures, the membership of the Branch has increased from 17 to 24, and there is every prospect of still further addition to our membership. Above all, his teachings have shown the public that Theosophy is not a system of incomprehensible words and phrases, but a simple and practical religion adapted to all the needs of daily life. The lending library has been added to from time to time, but is still inadequate to meet the demands made

upon it so great is the interest shown in Theosophic literature. Many books have also been sold, Mrs. Besant's seeming to rank first in public favor. Count Wachtmeister is with us at present making arrangements for Mrs. Besant's lectures. She and Countess Wachtmeister are expected Saturday the 1st of May. A reception will be given them that evening, and on the following evenings, in the Los Angeles Theatre, Mrs. Besant gives her public lectures.

HATTIE RANDOLPH,
Sec'y Harmony Lodge, T. S.

NEW YORK, April 18th.—The charters to new Branches issued thus far are as follows:

Yggdrasil Lodge, T. S., Minneapolis, Minn., January 25th, with 13 members. The President is Mr. Neils Guel; the Secretary, Mr. Thos. A. Netland, 228 Central Ave.

Streator T. S., Streator, Ill., with 12 members, February 19th.

Fidelity T. S., Buffalo, N. Y., with 8 members, March 31st. The President is Dr. Thos P. C. Barnard; the Secretary, Miss Annie F. Hastings, 397 Goundry St., North Tonawanda, N. Y.

Englewood White Lodge, T. S., Chicago, Ill., April 1st, with 9 members. The President is Mrs. Maud L. Howard; the Secretary, Miss Gertrude Longenecker, 7257 Stewart Ave.

Cleveland T. S., Cleveland, Ohio, April 3d, with 12 members. The President is Mrs. Amanda L. Cady; the Secretary, Miss Helen B. Olmsted, 1085 Prospect St.

The above 5 Branches are due to the work of the Countess Wachtmeister.

Mercury T. S., Brooklyn, N. Y., April 2d, with 9 members. The President is Mr. Alfred A. Ury; the Secretary, Miss Ellen H. Hendrickson, 424 Franklin Ave.

New York T. S., N. Y. C., April 4th, with 20 members. Officers are not yet elected.

Washington T. S., Washington, D. C. April 13th, with 20 members. The President is Mr. Azes, J. Cary; the Secretary, Mrs. Anna M. Jacquess, 202 Indiana, Ave., N. W.

These 3 branches are due to the work of Mrs. Annie Besant.

There are now 28 Branches in the American Section.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, Gen'l Sec'y.

AUSTRALASIAN SECTION.—The Third Annual Convention of this Section takes place in Sydney of April 16th and 17th. Owing to the illness of our General Secretary, which prevented his return to Australia when expected, it was found impossible to hold the Convention at Adelaide as in-

tended. Early in January a Branch was chartered at Perth Western Australia, this is the first branch of the Theosophical Society which has come into existence as yet in that colony, and as it includes amongst its its fourteen charter members, many earnest and well-read members who have gone to that colony from branches in Victoria or New South Wales, it ought to give a good account of itself. In spite of the serious illness of Mr. Staples, all the branches are unanimous in wishing that, if possible, he shall return to us, even if it is necessary for him to remain away three or four months to recruit. Our older branches continue their active public propaganda, and we have a slow but steady stream of applications for membership. *Theosophy in Australasia* is to be elevated to the rank of a magazine, with sixteen pages, and a cover, and it is hoped that it may now prove not the least valuable of the sectional activities. H. A. W.

SCANDINAVIAN SECTION, GÖTEBORG, March 9th, 1897.—The Scandinavian Section of the T. S. had a public meeting, on the 24th of January, in the great hall of the Agricultural Academy, Stockholm. Mrs. Helen Sjösted lectured on "Thought Control," based on the second chapter of "In the Outer Court," by A. Besant. An essay by George Ljungstrom on "Egotism and Altruism" was also read. On the 10th of February, the Section celebrated its anniversary by a social gathering. The general Secretary, Mr. A. Lettersten gave an account of the work of the Section during the past year. The Lodges Orion and Ajax have agreed to hold thier meetings together on the 4th Thursday of every month. Subjects of lectures during the last meetings were: "Velocity of Thought," by G. Ljungstrom; "God and Prayer," Higher and Lower Ideals," Sven Nilson; "The Discipline of the Soul," A. Besant; "A. Fancy," Ivy Hooper. Norway—Subjects of lectures in February were "Religious and the Occult Sciences," R. Eriksen; "The Life of the Disciple," O. Dahl; "The Human Soul," T. A. Lundgren; "Reincarnation," R. Eriksen.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION March, 1897.—Miss Edger's Auckland lectures are still arousing much interest. They are always well attended, and cause a good deal of intelligent discussion and questioning. Mrs. Richmond, President of the Christchurch Branch, lectured in Auckland on Sunday, March 14th, on "The Message of Theosophy," to a good audience. Mrs. Richmond has been spending a week or two in Auckland, and on her return journey to Christchurch she will visit the new Branch at Wanganui, lecturing there; and also lecturing at Palmerstonworth. Christchurch Branch is going actively into the work. One of the members, Mr. McCombs, has started a series of lectures in the suburbs of the city, and also at Karipoi and Rangiora, and has been successful in arousing enough interest to encourage him to continue his efforts.

TO THE EDITOR OF MERCURY:

May I correct a very singular and wide-spread impression as to the functions and duties of the General Secretary of the American Section, this correction becoming necessary because of the increasing difficulty of making it privately?

It is largely believed that the General Secretary conducts a book and photograph shop; fills orders for magazines and publications; undertakes commissions for search after second-hand works; writes out for private F. T. S. the general Theosophical news given in the sectional magazine; vouchsafes chatty letters to all persons expressing a wish for them; is ready with opinions, speculations, prophecies and comments; is the one to be invoked for an answer to a newspaper criticism, a denial of every silly story, an essay on any point striking the reader of a daily paper; is an authority on domestic duties, personal obligations, karmic sufferings, family difficulties and Bible texts (one letter contains 54 separate questions on such matters); knows exactly when new books are to be issued by foreign or domestic publishers, and their price; receives changes of address from subscribers to MERCURY, and should call on any F. T. S. passing through this city and sending word for him to do so.

Now in the statement by the Constitution (Art. II, Sec. 2) of the General Secretary's duties, not one of the above is mentioned! Strange to say, an intimation that such are outside his range, are quite impracticable, and would require a leisure which does not exist, is resented. Perhaps the intimation and the resentment may be saved by an impersonal and printed notice like this. There is a marvelous magic in type, and it will be so much easier to point to a page in MERCURY than to write a page of explanation,

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, Gen'l Sec'y A. S.

April 15th, 1897.

BOOK REVIEWS.

LUCIFER for March.—The Watch Tower discusses "Atomic Motion and the Atomic Life of Metals," speaks of the "Discovery in Egypt of a Copy of the Logia, or Sayings of Jesus," and quotes largely from Professor Crooke's address before the Society of Psychical Research. F. H. Bowring continues his elucidation of "Remarkable Passages in the New Testament." Light upon our own Scriptures is sadly needed, and these studies are very luminous and will be of much use to students. "Among the Gnostics" is specially interesting and suggestive, dealing with the

Serpent and Egg myth, the Exodus myth and the outlines of the mystic ideas of Gnosticism. "Cataclysms and Earthquakes," in this paper Mr. Sinnett, quoting from Professor Milne, the present highest authority on Seismology, shows that earthquakes are "shivers," so to speak, of Mother Earth. These "shivers," or wave motions, are described as "bradyseismic disturbances," and these disturbances "taken in conjunction with the secular flow of rocks," are considered to be the real cause of tremors. Mr. Leadbeater begins a series of papers on "Our Relation to Children," which promises to be very helpful. "Theosophy and Science" concluded. In this number Professor Mackenzie deals with ethics and proves from the very words of noted scientists and philosophers the inadequacy of material intellect to solve the problems of the soul. In conclusion he says: "What the world wants to-day is a system of religion and philosophy which will unite the hearts and souls of men, and which will satisfactorily answer the questions of science, life and religion, teaching us our relation to the world, to duty, and to God. * * * There are many things in Theosophy which lead me to think that this is ITS destiny." "The Phædo of Plato" and "The Sankhya Philosophy" continued.

THEOSOPHIST, March.—Colonel Olcott continues his delightful "Old Dairy Leaves," which close in this number, with an amusing instance of fanaticism, *viz.*, the proceedings from admission fee to Col. Olcott's first lecture at Ootacamund (Madras), having been sent as a gift to the local hospital, it was refused by the military Treasurer of that institution on account of its being devil-money!" The other contributions are "The Education of Hindu Youth," by Mrs. Besant; the conclusion of Mr. Bilimoria's "Sun Worship Among the Parsis;" some excellent remarks on "Evolution," by the N. Zealand, Secretary-General T. S., Miss L. Edger; another installment of R. A. Sastry, on "Gaudapada and his Devi Sutras; a criticism on certain articles published in the Australian "Harbinger of Light," about "Spiritualism and Reincarnation," showing that not all spiritualistic communications deny reincarnation; "Old Indian Theosophy," as found in local productions, by I. M. Hora; a scientific calculation of the "Earth's

Second Motion (retrocession of the Ecliptic), the rate being 476 hundredths of a second per solar year; and, finally, the usual correspondence, reviews and cuttings. A supplement contains a notice of Dr. Barrows' visit to Madras. As it could well be expected, the Reverend Doctor seems to have everywhere failed to convince the Hindus, that Christianity was better, or even as good as their own forms of religion.

A. M.

BULLETIN DE LA PRESSE, Paris.—This special publication is now trying to make a census of all the periodicals dedicated the world over, to spiritualism and occult studies, this including Theosophy: and up to date, it has been able to collect 105 names, though the list is certainly still incomplete; it will be published in the next issue of the *Guide de la Presse*, 21 Quai St. Michel, Paris.

THE BRAHMAVADIN, February, Nos. 12 and 13, continues its "Extracts from the Veda and the Vedanta," the subjects of which are Vayu and Rudra, with "Extracts from Vedantic Commentaries," by S. S. Sastri. The Editorials are on the "Jivatman," an masterly disquisition, and the "Mission of the Vedanta in the World;" the Open Column contains "Bhaktiyoga," by Miss S. E. Waldo, Swami Vivekananda at Kumbakonam and "Universal Religion," by Yogi S. P. Aiyangar, all these articles making excellent readings for those interested in Hindu philosophy.

THE THINKER, February Number.—Our old friend continues to publish interesting fragments of various Hindu philosophical and religious works, besides containing excellent editorials, those now before us being on "Reverence, Gate of Mukti and Purity of Thought, Word and Deed." "Prana" is especially dealt with, and various interviews are reported with Vivekananda, the well-known exponent of Hinduism at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, in which the Swami expresses very original views about America and the Americans. What bids fair to be a very readable article is one on "Revival of Forms." A discussion on Gita is wisely cut short by the Editor, to whom the reviewer sends his greetings for his patient and valuable work.

A. M.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

THE FLAME FLOWER

OR

Stuart's Dream.

Stuart and Margery were busy at work in the little garden plot given to them for their very own by their kind mamma. Such a pretty nook it was, just behind the big date palm, and watched over by a dear old olive tree. Margery called this olive tree the good fairy, and certainly it was very hospitable; so thought a humming-bird vine which had intertwined its bright, scarlet clusters in among the soft greys of the tree of peace. Olive and vine took as much interest in the garden as did the children themselves, and watched with pride the pansies purple, and gold, white and bronze that laughed and chatted in one corner; they smiled on nodding baby-blue eyes and twinkling forget-me-nots, and were also on excellent terms with the rosebushes, three in number, that graced the plot.

Margery and Stuart had determined upon a double border of petunias and poppies, and, as you know, were busy sowing the seed for these future glories.

"Stuart, do you suppose they like being put down here into the earth?"

"Don't suppose anything about it. Seeds haven't likes and dislikes."

"Oh! but they have, returned Margery, "why they must else—else—why they would get mixed, and you know they won't. You ask the good fairy here. Queer things seeds, so tiny to have such big flowers inside!"

"You're the queer one, Margery, to think of such things. The flowers aren't inside, flowers grow!"

"But don't they grow from the seeds?"

"Of course, everybody knows that, replied Stuart, with the superior air of a boy who knows so much that he does not wonder any more.

"Come, come, Margery, drop in the seeds and don't dream."

"I need not drop them in if the flowers are not inside—there, now!"

"Think what you like, Margy, only drop them in."

"I say every seed is an enchanted princess, a flower princess."

"Won't you put in a prince?"

"Well, then, enchanted princes and princesses—all fast, fast asleep. Bye-and-bye comes the fairy queen and—but why are you looking so seriously at that seed?"

"It is queer, that's fact, that this wee dried up speck will be some day a lovely petunia. I must ask the Professor about it?"

"'Taint no use, I've asked teacher and the Professor, and mamma and papa, and they don't any of them know. I expect our good olive tree knows all about it. Don't you, good fairy?"

"It's queer, and I never thought of it before," whispered the boy.

He thought of it many times afterwards, and one day Margery found him with his head close down to the earth under which the seeds were lying cosily.

"Listening for the flower fairy, eh?" laughed Margery.

"I'm thinking," answered Stuart, slightly flushing, "you set me thinking, Margy, the flowers must be there, after all."

"Of course, there—didn't you see the olive tree nod 'yes?' Now, Stuart, we'll ask our good fairy, the olive, to tell us all about it. I think if we listen—listen with all our might, as teacher says—we may hear what she has to tell us; or, perhaps, we shall hear the flowers move down there."

"Let's," rejoined Stuart, who to tell the truth, felt very heavy-hearted; things had gone wrong with him—and for once, life seemed very hard to bear, even play had lost its charm.

"I'll go and fetch Marguerite," cried Margy. Off she ran to fetch Miss Marguerite, her oldest doll daughter; but it is to be supposed that dolly did not care to come, for Margery came not back. Stuart grumbled at first, then he began thinking about seeds, flowers, fairies and bad marks till, at last, he fell asleep. Had the olive tree charmed him? It is very likely, for he dreamed such a dream!

He saw the seeds lying in their furrow under the soil; and more he seemed to be, himself, a seed. You know how it is in dreams when one feels oneself two or three people at once. It

was very dark down there, and the earth clung round warm and close; it seemed like prison. Then a soft murmur ran from seed to seed, the dreamer felt something stir within him and looking about—for although it was dark, yet he could see he noticed that there shone in every tiny seed a spark of flame light and in that light quivered the flower its bright tints, its delicate leaves, its graceful stem all distinct and clear like or fairy picture. The flower of light, or rather the flowers, for all the seeds, save one or two, were a light with life—seemed to say “outward; upward to the light.” How that voice thrilled through him, thrilled through all the seeds, so that they burst open and he felt them go out into the dark earth and of its gifts. And the earth gave of its gifts lovingly, and the flame grew strong and became a delicate white shaft. It looked so frail, so small, and Stuart felt as if the earth clots must crush it, but as he watched, he saw the flame-flower within the white shaft, and again he heard the voice: “Onward, upward—the earth helps—the darkness helps—onward, upward!” At last, the shaft reached the sunlit air and the flame-flower within felt so joyous that it shot forth rays of delicate green that unfolded into leaves. And the boy saw the flame-flower breathe in the air by means of tiny openings all over these leaves. How it rejoiced as it took of the gifts of the air and wove them into its own life. But the rains beat upon the fragile stem and Stuart felt the flower-life tremble, but again arose its voice: “The rains will help as the darkness helped.” The voice was stronger now. Then the winds raged round and against the upspringing plant and it seemed as if all its efforts would be vain, and the storm must destroy the flower-life, but it bowed sweetly before the wind singing again, “The winds shall help,” and the boy saw that the flower-lives grow stronger by grace of the gifts of rain-drop and air-breath, and ever the flower-life, once a wee, small spark grew, expanded, unfolded, while weaving for itself dainty robes of fragrant color—and still it worked, storing up rays of itself in little black grains that people call seeds.

“Stuart, Stuart, awake!”

“Oh! Margy, such a dream!” cried the awakened dreamer, pinching himself the while to tell whether he was Stuart Lindsay, or a seed with a flame-flower quivering within. “Such a dream!”

“Yes, the fairies have told you the secret, I see it in your eyes. Now tell me.”

AUNT MAY.